

**Civic Reflection Curriculum**  
**Covenant Group**  
**Unitarian Church of Evanston**  
**Evanston, IL**  
**2008-2009**

**Program Summary**

One covenant group (small group ministry) at the Unitarian Church of Evanston used readings from *The Civically Engaged Reader* for a year-long civic reflection program. Sessions focused on questions relating to the seven Unitarian Universalist principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- 1: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- 2: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- 3: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- 4: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- 5: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- 6: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- 7: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

**Participants**

Members of a covenant group, a small relational group made up of 6-12 people who meet regularly to establish and nurture themselves in their own beloved community. Meetings occur once or twice per month and last for two hours.

**Facilitators**

Each member of the group chose one or two readings, prepared opening and closing words, and facilitated one of the sessions.

**Readings and Themes**

<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>UU Principle</i>
Alden Nowlan	He Sits Down on the Floor of a School for the Retarded	#1
Langston Hughes	Theme for English B	
Nikki Giovanni	The Women Gather	#1
Adam Davis	What We Don't Talk About When We Don't	#2

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<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>UU Principle</i>
Elizabeth Lynn & Susan Wisely	Talk About Service Four Traditions of Philanthropy	
Marge Piercy	To Be of Use	#2
Nathaniel Hawthorne	The Minister's Black Veil	#3
Franz Kafka	Fellowship	#3
Imtiaz Dharker	They'll say 'She must be from another country'	#1 and #3
Toni Cade Bambara Billy Collins	The Lesson The History Teacher	#4
Constantine Cavafy	Waiting for the Barbarians	#4
Martin Luther King, Jr.	The Drum Major Instinct	#5
Abraham Lincoln	Second Inaugural Address	#5
Commission on Social Witness	UUA Draft Statement of Conscience on Peacem	#6 and #7

### Feedback from Participants

- *This process has led to fruitful discussion. This is a very appropriate structure for our church and our principles and allows us to give thought and good communal reflection. I am pleased with the richness of the readings. [They] are adaptable to what we need to talk about.*
- *This process of civic reflection provides a meaningful structure for our Unitarian Universalist covenant group to have deeper conversations with each other about our UU principles and how we live our principles in the world. Through the readings and discussion, I feel more connected to the others in the group and grateful to learn and grow from each person's perspective.*
- *Our civic life is shaped by so many parts of our life, including our spiritual perspective. Civic reflection has been transformative to my spiritual growth as I learn to listen to and respect others and as we work toward making this a just and whole world.*
- *The selections in The Civically Engaged Reader raise issues very relevant to faith communities and have been helpful in deepening my understanding of those moral and ethical dilemmas in society.*
- *I have found the civic reflection studies to be extraordinarily rewarding. The selections are all great reading, and I have read and re-read many of them even before they were assigned for the covenant group. As for their relevance for our group, they are really perfect in the way they consistently relate to our seven principles and stimulate serious and thoughtful discussion. I should think that any reasonably progressive religious group would greatly benefit from this course.*